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## **MAUI CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ENDORSES "CARE" EDUCATION REFORM**

### **Chamber Calls on Legislature to Let the People Decide on Local School Boards**

WAILUKU – The Maui Chamber of Commerce, which has long-supported a decentralized school system, today formally endorsed Governor Linda Lingle's education reform proposal to let the voters of Hawaii decide if they want locally elected school boards.

The endorsement of the CARE (Citizens Achieving Reform in Education) school reform initiatives reflects the Chamber's recognition of the need to establish local school boards in each county to give parents, educators, community members and students more input into how policy education decisions are made. The Chamber also supports the CARE proposal to mandate that 90 percent of all operating funds go to the school level through a weighted student formula that attaches money to each student, based on his or her education needs.

"The Maui Chamber supports the Governor's efforts to reform our educational system through decentralization and adequate funding for our schools," said Steve Williams, chairman of the Maui Chamber of Commerce. "We believe the Governor's proposal, as recommended by the CARE committee, to establish local school boards is the right approach to ensure student achievement and excellence in our schools. We also strongly agree that 90 percent of funds need to be directed at the school level, where principals and teachers can identify the most effective way to spend the resources. We call on the Legislature to give the people of our state the opportunity to decide whether they want to establish local school boards."

“I applaud the Maui Chamber of Commerce for this important endorsement of our education reform initiatives,” said Governor Lingle. “The Chamber recognizes that without fundamental changes to dissolve the Department of Education, principals in our schools will not have control over the money they need to improve student success. Support from organizations like the Chamber is needed if we are to achieve true education reform.”

The endorsement of the Maui Chamber of Commerce, with more than 900 members, comes at a critical time as the Legislature prepares to decide on a number of other education-related proposals. The Chamber believes that without decentralizing the current school system and replacing it with local school boards that would be directly accountable to the people, the measures still being considered by the Legislature will not provide the comprehensive level of reform needed to ensure student achievement.

“As the primary voice for Maui’s business community, part of our charge is to advocate for laws and programs that are responsive to the current and future demands of Maui’s economy, which includes creating a skilled and productive workforce,” said Lynne Woods, executive director, Maui Chamber of Commerce. “The CARE initiatives will provide the education reform needed to prepare the children of Maui to compete for quality jobs in the global marketplace.”

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